

“YAGIS IN THE MOONLIGHT”
KR8L (+N7NHF) Limited Multioperator
September 1995 VHF QSO Party

Big Southern Butte, ID
–DN33lj –

For the 1995 September VHF QSO Party the KR8L Limited Multioperator Team decided to travel to Big Southern Butte, an extinct volcanic cinder cone. The butte sits on the Arco Desert about 50 miles west of Idaho Falls, ID, and rises almost a half-mile above the surrounding terrain. From the peak of the butte there is a 360 degree negative horizon. The closest mountains are about 30 miles to the northwest; in other directions there are no obstructions for up to 80 miles.

Our past VHF contest and QSO Party attempts have definitely been learning experiences, mostly thrown together at the last minute. This time we felt that we were ahead of the game and that we had most of the details well planned out. Much of our equipment was packed and ready to go a week before the event.

Despite our extensive planning, we departed Idaho Falls about an hour behind schedule, mostly due to some last minute non-radio related errands. KR8L reached the top of the butte at about 1910Z and immediately started making contacts on 2m FM. N7NHF arrived a few minutes later and took over on 2m and 70cm FM while KR8L unpacked the FT736-R, 6m halo, VHF and UHF Yagis, battery, coax, etc. At 1945Z we brought out the IC-502 and made a couple of quick contacts on 6m SSB with the built-in whip and internal batteries.

We had the antennas in place and most of the equipment on the air by around 2030Z, and had a busy afternoon of operating. We ate a steak dinner at about 0030Z, and closed down for the night at 0300Z. Stepping outside the camper after dark we were treated to a beautiful view of the near-full moon above our antennas, illuminating the desert a half mile below us. We awoke at about 1300Z on Sunday and resumed operations shortly thereafter. Activity picked up quite a bit around 1500Z, and we ate bites of breakfast between contacts. We shut down at 1800Z and started taking the station apart for the trip down the butte.

Final results: 87 QSOs in 14 grids and 5 states (ID, UT, WY, CO. NV).

We had a lot of fun. Our only regret was the lack of ROVERS. Unfortunately, the present rover rules have effectively abolished this class of operation in this part of the country.